

LFU10 – SOP for Release of Latent Fingerprint Case Information

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1. Scope

- 1.1. To adhere to accreditation standards the Latent Fingerprint Unit under the D.C. Department of Forensic Sciences will not release case information over the phone without authorization from the laboratory management.

2. Background

- 2.1. To establish the practices for documenting the examination of evidence to conform to the requirements of the Department of Forensic Sciences (DFS) Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) *Quality Assurance Manual*, the accreditation standards under ISO/IEC 17025:2005, and any supplemental standards.
- 2.2. All information in the laboratory is to be treated as confidential. Any and all case information or results are only to be discussed with the contributor and/or individuals authorized by the contributor after the required technical and/or administrative reviews are complete. *Reports of Examination* and/or *AFIS hit notifications* will be released to the contributor and/or other individuals authorized by the contributor only after the required technical and/or administrative reviews are complete. Case materials, such as examination documents, will be released to appropriate parties only upon request and approval by the Laboratory Manager, the Deputy Director of Quality Assurance, or designee.

3. Safety

- 3.1. Not applicable

4. Materials Required

- 4.1. Not applicable

5. Standards and Controls

- 5.1. Unless the case is a major case or priority, or extenuating circumstances require action, no results should be disseminated until the report is officially reviewed and released. Exceptions to this procedure must be noted in the communication log by the Laboratory Manager or designee.

6. Calibration

- 6.1. Not applicable

7. Procedures

- 7.1. Phone Requests for Case Information

7.1.1. The administrative staff in the Latent Fingerprint Unit will act as the point of contact for all incoming communication. If a request is made over the phone for case information, the administrative staff will direct the caller to submit the request in writing (via e-mail) and log this exchange in the communication log.

- 7.2. Written or E-mail Requests for Case Information

7.2.1. The administrative staff in the Latent Fingerprint Unit will act as the point of contact for all incoming communication. If a request is made to any of the unit staff via e-mail, the request will be forwarded to the administrative staff and recorded in the communication log.

- 7.3. Review of Requests for Case Information

7.3.1. It is the duty of the Laboratory Manager or designee to review the requests for case information on a daily basis and determine the appropriate response. If the case is complete and the report is reviewed and disseminated, the request can be forwarded to the analyst for a response or the report can be re-disseminated to satisfy the request. If the case is still in progress, the manager will review the case information and reply as necessary, based on the protocol below.

7.4. Responses to Requests for Case Information

- 7.4.1. All responses to the requests for case information should be done electronically (via e-mail) to act as a record of the communication, and a copy of the e-mail will be added to the communication log. If a phone conversation is necessary, the exchange must be noted in the communication log. Responses to active or in-progress cases should only be sent out by the Laboratory Manager or designee after the case material has been reviewed and noted having been reviewed.

7.5. Request for Release of Latent Evidence

- 7.5.1. The original evidence will not be released. All Latent Lift(s) will be recorded on an appropriated digital media, such as a CD. The CD will be labeled with identifying information, such as; MCL#, CCN# and Item#. The CD cover will be initial and dated by the analyst. The CD will be properly sealed and place in an evidence bag. Chain of Custody form will be documented.

8. Sampling

- 8.1. Not applicable

9. Calculations

- 9.1. Not applicable

10. Uncertainty of Measurement

- 10.1. When quantitative results are obtained, and the significance of the value may impact the report, the uncertainty of measurement must be determined. The method used to determine the estimation of uncertainty can be found in the *FSL Quality Assurance Manual – Estimation of Uncertainty of Measurement (Section 5.4.6)*.

11. Limitations

- 11.1. Not applicable

12. Documentation

- 12.1. LFU Examination Worksheets

12.2. LFU Report of Results

12.3. LFU Communication Logs

13. References

13.1. Forensic Science Laboratory Quality Assurance Manual (Current Version)

13.2. FSL Departmental Operations Manuals (Current Versions)

13.3. FSL Laboratory Operations Manuals (Current Versions)